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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/802,855	03/18/2004	Shigeru Okazaki	08830.0014	7721
22852	7590	12/15/2005	EXAMINER	
FINNEGAN, HENDERSON, FARABOW, GARRETT & DUNNER LLP 901 NEW YORK AVENUE, NW WASHINGTON, DC 20001-4413			NGUYEN, ANTHONY H	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2854	

DATE MAILED: 12/15/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

DETAILED ACTION

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on November 14, 2005 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) a patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1,3-6 and 8-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over Maruyama et al. (US 5,752,154) in view of Naramore et al. (US 5,630,578).

With respect to claims 1, 4, 6, 9, 13 and 14, Maruyama et al. teaches an image forming apparatus having a paper handling apparatus which includes a paper guide opening 71A for receiving a paper from outside and a paper discharge opening 71B. The paper guiding opening and discharge opening are arranged at the same height (Maruyama et al., Figs. 1, 15 and 16 and col.7 line 57- col.8 line 22). Maruyama et al. does not clearly teach the coupling section being provided at a position for coupling to other paper handling apparatus. Naramore et al. teaches a paper handling apparatus having a paper guide opening for receiving a paper from outside

(Naramore et al., Fig.1, the indicated arrow on the left side of the Figure) and a paper discharge opening 21 and a coupling section 16, 42 which is closely positioned above the paper guiding opening in a vertical direction as shown in Figs.1 and 6 of Naramore et al. In view of the teaching of Naramore et al., it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill to modify the paper handling apparatus of Maruyama et al. by providing the coupling section as taught by Naramore et al. for simplicity in design of a paper handling apparatus. Also, note that the coupling 16, 42 of Naramore et al. is arranged at two positions approximately symmetric to the center of the feeding path as shown in Fig.7. With respect to claims 3 and 8, the selection of a desired distance range between the coupling section and the paper guide opening would be obvious through routine experimentation in order to get best possible secured positions between the handling apparatus. With respect to claims 5 and 10, Maruyama et al. teaches the image system having a plurality of paper handling apparatuses 1103, 1104, an image forming apparatus 21-28, a paper feeding apparatus (14, 15) in the image forming apparatus and the paper post-processing apparatus 71 or 75 (Maruyama et al., Fig.1). With respect to claim 11, Maruyama et al. teaches the conventional displacement detection section 1003 and 1004 (Maruyama et al., Figs 36-38) for detecting a displacement of paper as shown in Figs. 36-38 of Maruyama et al. With respect to claim 12, the use of two image forming apparatus for printing the first side and the second side of a paper is well known in the art.

Response to Arguments

Applicants' arguments filed on November 14, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive of any errors in view of a new ground(s) of rejection(s) above.

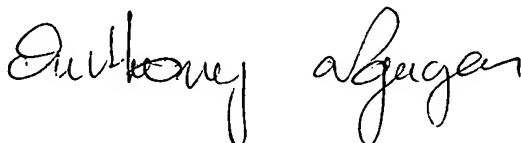
Art Unit: 2854

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Anthony Nguyen whose telephone number is (571) 272-2169.

The examiner can normally be reached daily from 9 AM to 5PM. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Andrew Hirshfeld, can be reached on (571) 272-2168.

The fax phone number for this Group is (571) 273-8300.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony Nguyen", with a stylized, cursive script.

Anthony Nguyen
12/12/2005
Patent Examiner
Technology Center 2800